

A U S T R A L I A N
GARDEN
H I S T O R Y

JOURNAL OF THE AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY



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Cover: Waioira in the Adelaide Hills, pictured during the 1983 AGHS National Conference. The conference will again be held in Adelaide this year and details of the programme will be included in the next issue of this journal.

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The Australian Garden History Society was formed in 1980 to bring together those with an interest in the various aspects of garden history—horticulture, landscape design, architecture and related subjects. Its prime concern is to promote interest and research into historic gardens as a major component of the National Estate. It aims to look at garden making in a wide historic, literary, artistic and scientific context.

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THE QUEEN OF AQUATICS

Victoria amazonica

Late in life Ferdinand von Mueller recalled to a botanical friend that, along with the geyser fountain, aviary and pinetum, the cultivation and flowering of *Victoria amazonica* was his proudest achievement at Melbourne's botanic gardens.¹ Robert Schomburgk had introduced the plant to a fascinated audience at the Royal Geographical Society in 1837. He discovered it in British Guiana while undertaking an exploring expedition for the Society. To cultivate it henceforward became a passion, first for botanists in England, and then, others throughout the colonies, including those of Australia. As English gardener Joseph Paxton was to write: 'The sight [of the lily] is worth a journey of a thousand miles.'²

The first botanist to see *Victoria amazonica* was the Bohemian Thadaeus Haencke in 1801. German botanist Eduard Poeppig was the first to give it a full description, however, and named it *Euryale amazonica* in 1832. Apparently Schomburgk was unaware of this history when he spoke to the Royal Geographical Society. He asked for the plant to be called *Nymphaea victoria* in honor of Queen Victoria. Nevertheless, this name was abandoned when closer examination of the plant revealed that it was not a *Nymphaea* but a new genus altogether. Almost simultaneously a string of alternative names appeared in print, including *Victoria regina*, *Victoria regia* and *Victoria regalis*.

At last the prior naming by Poeppig was remembered,

but it too was disputed on the grounds of the plant not being a *Euryale*. According to botanical convention the solution was to call it *Victoria amazonica* but this was offensive to Victorian taste. As William Hooker, Director of Kew Gardens, put it, the specific *amazonica* was

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in connection with the name of
Her Most Gracious Majesty and must
therefore forthwith be rejected'

'totally unsuited to be in connection with the name of Her Most Gracious Majesty and must therefore forthwith be rejected'. The Queen, after all, was the symbol of all feminine virtues, and amazons were the muscular viragoes of foreign legend. Thus in Australia Mueller referred to *Victoria regia* and not *V. amazonica*. It was not until after the Queen's death that the specific name *amazonica* came into public use.³

The first consignment of seed sent by Schomburgk to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew germinated but did not survive. William Hooker suggested that in future the seed

Victoria and Lucy in the Adelaide botanic gardens



should be dispatched in phials of pure water, and in 1849 one of these was given to the Duke of Northumberland at Syon, another to the Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth, and one to Kew. Who would be the first to bring the lily into bloom? In November 1849, Joseph Paxton, gardener to the Duke of Devonshire, wrote to his master: 'Victoria has shown flower!' Another year was to pass before Kew also successfully coaxed the lily into bloom.⁴

Paxton wrote 'No words can describe the grandeur and the beauty of the plant'... Schomburgk described their scent as resembling crushed pineapple

Paxton wrote: 'No words can describe the grandeur and the beauty of the plant.'⁵ Nevertheless, many words have been expended on descriptions of its rapid growth and spectacularly large form. After germination the first leaf to appear is grass-like, the second is arrow-headed and later leaves are circular. In two or three weeks these grow to between one and two metres in diameter and assume a fresh green colour with red upturned edges. The underside of the leaf is purplish with massive veins and ribs radiating from the centre. The buds emerge shaped like prickly pears, and open at dusk into flowers of up to 80 white petals spanning 30 to 36cm. Schomburgk described their

scent as resembling crushed pineapple. Over a period of about three days the flowers change colour to pink then purplish-red, and then sink into the water where they expel large shiny seed pods and eventually rot.⁶

In Australia, at the time of the English flowering, botanic gardens existed at Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney. With his international contacts Mueller seemed to be well placed to obtain the first seed for cultivating the lily. But in South Australia lived Richard Schomburgk, brother of Robert, and also a member of the expedition to British Guiana, which had brought news of the giant lily to the Royal Geographical Society. Moreover, because Sydney and Brisbane had warm climates they would require less special facilities than the southern colonies to grow what was a tropical plant.

Mueller's monthly reports reveal that his first attempt to grow the lily was in 1859, ten years after it first flowered in England. He obtained seed for the purpose from conservative Melbourne politician, John Thomas Smith. The seed was successfully germinated, 'but the young plants were *accidentally* lost'. Mueller reported, 'by the bursting at night of the basin in which they were growing.'⁷ Only in his underlining of the word '*accidentally*' did he hint at the great disappointment he must have felt at this turn of events. Mueller tried again in 1860 with five lily roots obtained from a Mr Borbeay of Mauritius, but without success.⁸ A third attempt was made in 1861, using seed provided by a Professor Patterson of Dublin, but again the experiment resulted in failure.⁹ Then six years passed, apparently without any further attempts by Mueller to grow

Victoria regia at Royal Botanic Garden, Kew, 1989





LaTrobe Collection, State Library of Victoria

Victoria regia in the Melbourne Botanic Gardens (Australian News for Home Readers, April 1867)

the lily. In 1867, however, with seed from the Botanic Garden of Amsterdam, he at last achieved his goal.

the display
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and pink blossoms amply
compensated for the labor
which had been bestowed
upon its production

The press covered the event enthusiastically. In the *Australian News for Home Readers* a handsome engraving displayed the lily in its hot-house at the Melbourne botanic gardens. Pots placed around the edges of the pool were dwarfed by the great size of the lily, the leaves of which completely filled the space provided. In an accompanying text a reporter described the progress of the enterprise with great relish. Mueller had first placed the seeds in a flower pot, but only one germinated. This precious shoot was then removed into a tub of water with a few inches of earth at the bottom, and a large tank constructed to receive it once rapid growth started. The tank was about ten feet square, fully enclosed and heated by steam. A bed of earth was made below the surface of the water in the tank into which the tub was placed. The tub's sides were then removed and, 'the plant...left to luxuriate with plenty of room for maturing.'

Within a few weeks floating leaves emerged upon the surface of the water, daily spreading until they were from three to five feet in diameter. In all six appeared. At length a bud rose above the water but at first its development was retarded by unfavorable weather. A warm change, however, soon prompted it to unfold and, in the opinion of the reporter, 'the display of its beautiful rose and pink blossoms amply compensated for the labor which had been bestowed upon its production.'¹⁰

Meanwhile in South Australia Richard Schomburgk had become director of Adelaide's botanic gardens, and had

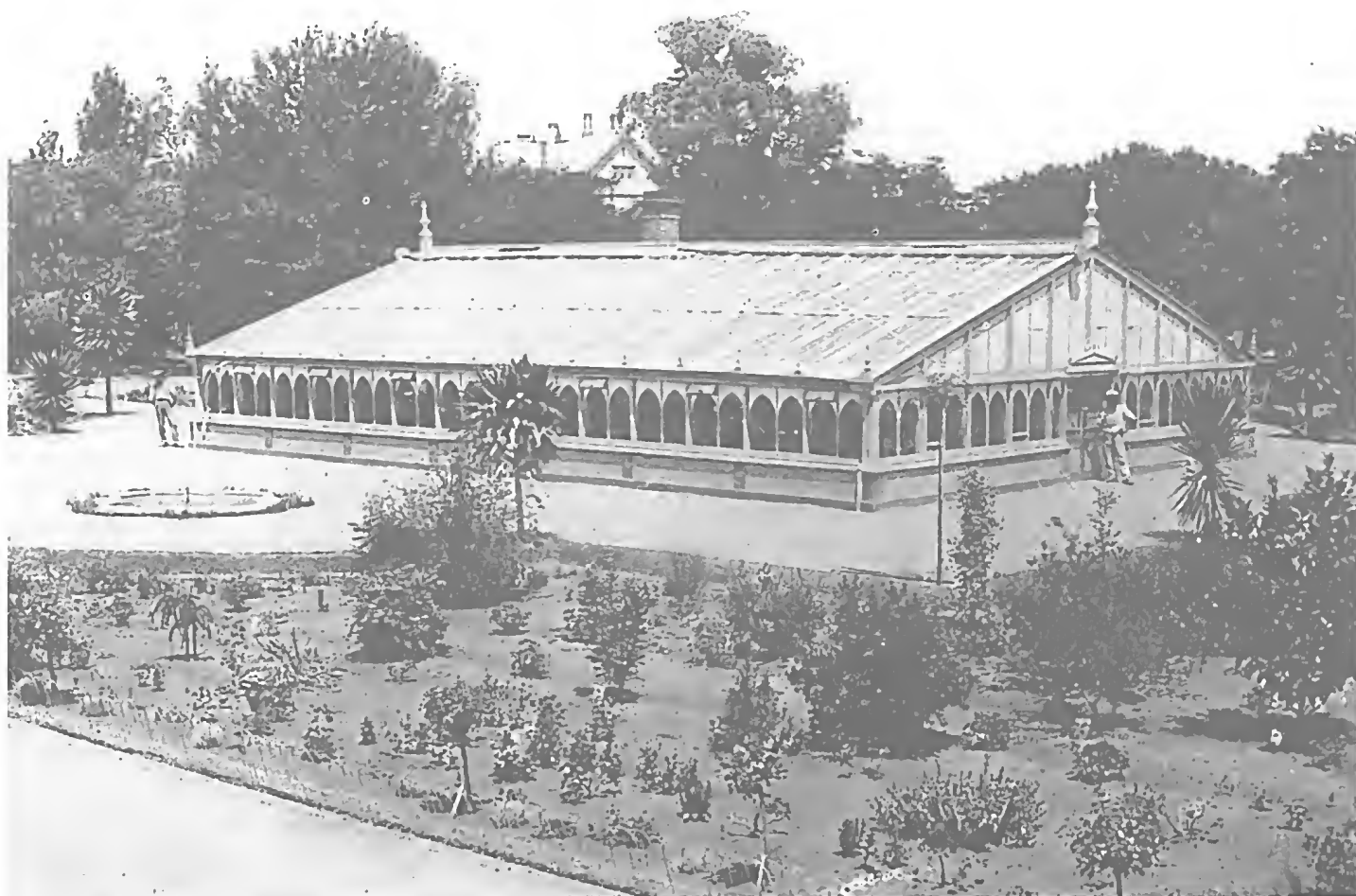
built a special Victoria House for the lily. In 1868 he succeeded in raising the plant and bringing it into flower, but Mueller had beaten him to the honor of being the first botanist to cultivate the plant in Australia.¹¹ It is not known why Schomburgk waited so long to cultivate the celebrated lily. He had been in South Australia since 1849 and in charge of Adelaide's botanic gardens since 1865. Rivalry certainly existed between the colonies, but Mueller at least was willing to share with other botanists the fruits of his successful labours. In 1868 he wrote to the Royal Society of Tasmania: 'If you could afford space and provide a temperature of 80 deg. F., I could send [you] a plant of the magnificent waterlily, the *Victoria regia*.'¹² Moreover, in his annual report of the following year he stated that he had ripened seed, 'available for transmission to the hotter parts of Australia.'¹³ He may even have given seed to Schomburgk, who visited him in Melbourne in 1868.¹⁴

People flocked to see the giant lily. In April 1867 Mueller's assistant at Melbourne's botanic gardens, Carl Wilhelmi, wrote a special letter to John Moore, permanent head of the government department responsible for the gardens, advising him that a flower was expected to appear between five and six o'clock that evening.¹⁵ In the first year of the lily's flowering in Adelaide 30,000 visitors came to see it over a period of four weeks.¹⁶

Paxton is also said
to have based his design
of the famous Crystal Palace on
the lily's intricate veins

There was great interest in the structure of the leaves, and experiments were conducted to see how much weight they could bear. In England Paxton had his nine year old daughter photographed as a fairy standing on one of the lily's leaves. Punch celebrated the occasion with a verse:

On unbent leaf in fairy guise,
Reflected in the water.
Beloved, admired by hearts and eyes,
Stands Annie, Paxton's daughter.¹⁷



Botanic Gardens of Adelaide

The Victoria House in the Adelaide Botanic Gardens, pictured late last century

Thereafter the image of a young girl standing on a lily pad became common. Paxton is also said to have based his design of the famous Crystal Palace on the lily's intricate veins. 'Nature,' he said, 'has provided the leaf with longitudinal and transverse girders and supports that I, borrowing from it, have adopted in this building.'¹⁸

Mueller grew the lily for four successive years from 1867. The plant also flowered in the directorship of William Guilfoyle but it no longer grows in Melbourne's botanic gardens. Schomburgk had more consistent success with the lily in Adelaide and this city's botanic garden is the only one in Australia to have regularly cultivated the *Victoria amazonica*. To succeed in having the lily flower at all was a considerable achievement because of the difficulties of creating a suitably warm and wet environment for it. To be the first to bring it into flower in Australia must have given Mueller very great satisfaction.

Sara Maroske

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CLARENCE RAILWAY STATION GARDEN

An example of Edwardian institutional landscape gardening

Introduction

At the turn of this century, the railway station was the main gateway to a town, no matter how small the population. Rail travel was a normal part of Victorian life. People arrived at a town and left via the station. The station formed the first visual impression of a town that visitors received, and the last that departees took with them on their journey. Towns grew, clustered around the station, with station buildings often acting as major civic buildings.

Railways were seen as a major civilising force in many of the colonies. Clearing of trees and constructed elements associated with the system, formed a node on twin ribbons of steel stretching into the distance. Platforms, station buildings, structures in the goods yard and train control equipment, defined the landscape precinct. A cultural enclave in the vastness of the great Australian bush. Stations were described in 1905 as being 'fresh and bright with gaily coloured blooms, in an area where the population is sparse and the sight of a cultivated or even attractive wild flower is rare'.

Working for the railways affected the employee's whole family, their home location, daily routines and attitudes to life

Labour was cheap and there could be many hours to wait between train movements on country lines. More importantly there was a sense of pride in the railways, being seen as a great work for the public good. (Lee, 1988) Employees could identify as belonging to a major Australian sub-culture, performing an important task vital to opening up the nation. Working for the railways affected the employee's whole family, their home location, daily routines and attitudes to life. Prior to the *Railway Act* of 1888, the future of rail travel held promise, exemplifying the widespread social confidence of the period.

By 1896 the New South Wales Government Railway's Railway Institute had a horticultural society among its band, camera, chess, cycling, musical, rifle, billiards, cricket, travelling and other clubs. Flower displays and competitions were held regularly. A series of philosophical writings on gardening appeared in the *New South Wales Railway Budget* during the late 1890s.

During the early part of 1899 the Railway Commissioners approved the awarding of prizes for the best kept station gardens within a radius of thirty-four miles of Sydney. Unfortunately the original rationale for establishing the annual gardens competition is at this stage unknown. However, the principal object of station gardens was later identified as 'to make the station surroundings picturesque'. Competition benefits were identified as a general improvement in appearance and surroundings of the sites and in the encouragement of others to maintain in good order those gardens already formed. Many favourable comments were received from passengers and others.



Clarence Railway Station early this century

In 1903 the zone of the competition was extended to include Hamilton, Goulburn, Mt Victoria and Nowra. The Blue Mountains featured strongly in the gardens competition from 1903 onwards. Boundaries of the judging regions changed frequently, sometimes each year, which makes tracing the development of individual stations very difficult.

Judging was usually by a three person committee, comprising both railway staff and a representative from the Sydney Botanic Gardens. Judges' reports often contain comments on placement and arrangement of plants, together with comments on the use of inappropriate containers. Use of native species was frequently recommended together with exotics. Guiding principles of judging were included in the *Railway Budget* of 1 November 1902:

- 1 General decorative effect as coming within view of the travelling public;
- 2 Improvement during the past year;
- 3 Consideration being also given to the advantages in soil and situation.

Utilitarian structures other than stations were also landscaped with small garden plots. Landscaping around depots, signal cabins, water pump houses and similar structures was seen as providing a good example to improving the surrounds of workers and adjoining civic areas. (Dunnart 1991) There was depth and reality in the period's urge to beautify. Stations were marked down where gardening effort was confined to one small part of the station, while the remainder was left barren. People were concerned for more than just the railway's highly visible public face.

Due to the interest in the station garden competition, a series of practical papers on horticulture as affecting railway stations, was published in the *New South Wales Railway Budget* from early 1904 to late 1905. Material covered bed design, ground preparation, species selection, general notes on different types of plants, with month by month details on seasonal care and horticultural maintenance.

Clarence Station gardens

One example of the hundreds of small country stations on the New South Wales Government Railway system was that of Clarence in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney. Clarence (originally called Clarence Siding) was the last station westward on the Blue Mountains plateau, before the main western line descended into the Lithgow valley, via the famous Zig Zag. Clarence was also the highest point on the western line, at an elevation of 3,658 feet. Opened in February 1878, the station provided a crossing place on the single track mainline between Mount Victoria and Bowenfels and amendments made to the station layout in 1897 resulted in the layout as shown in the accompanying photographs. (Wylie & Singleton, 1958)

Flower beds at the rear of the station platforms were all laid out in strictly formal geometric patterns, neatly edged in white

The landscaped platforms demonstrate local aspirations and civic pride. They reflect one of the most common styles of landscape design of the period. All native vegetation had been removed and replaced with introduced species such as freesias, snowflakes, narcissus, dahlias and chrysanthemums arranged in a contrived pattern. Flower beds at the rear of the station platforms were all laid out in strictly formal geometric patterns, neatly edged in white. This pattern of horticulture extended off the station platform to the plantings to be seen in the background of photographs taken during the period. Some of the background plantings are still extant around nearby houses such as the Oaks and Clarence House, on the hill behind the now

Clarence Garden First Prize, 1907

redeveloped station site.

Gardening at Clarence was started around 1904 and quickly progressed beyond any other on the Western Line. In 1905 a Mr H Cornell there was awarded Second Prize (of two) behind Balmoral in the relevant section of the gardens competition. The station was awarded the First Prize (of three) in the Western Line Station, both 1906 and 1907.

The Clarence Station gardens were so outstanding that in both 1906 and 1907 it was awarded an additional Champion Prize, as the 'Premier Garden' of station gardens from the whole of the New South Wales state railway system. Nomination was on the basis of the following:

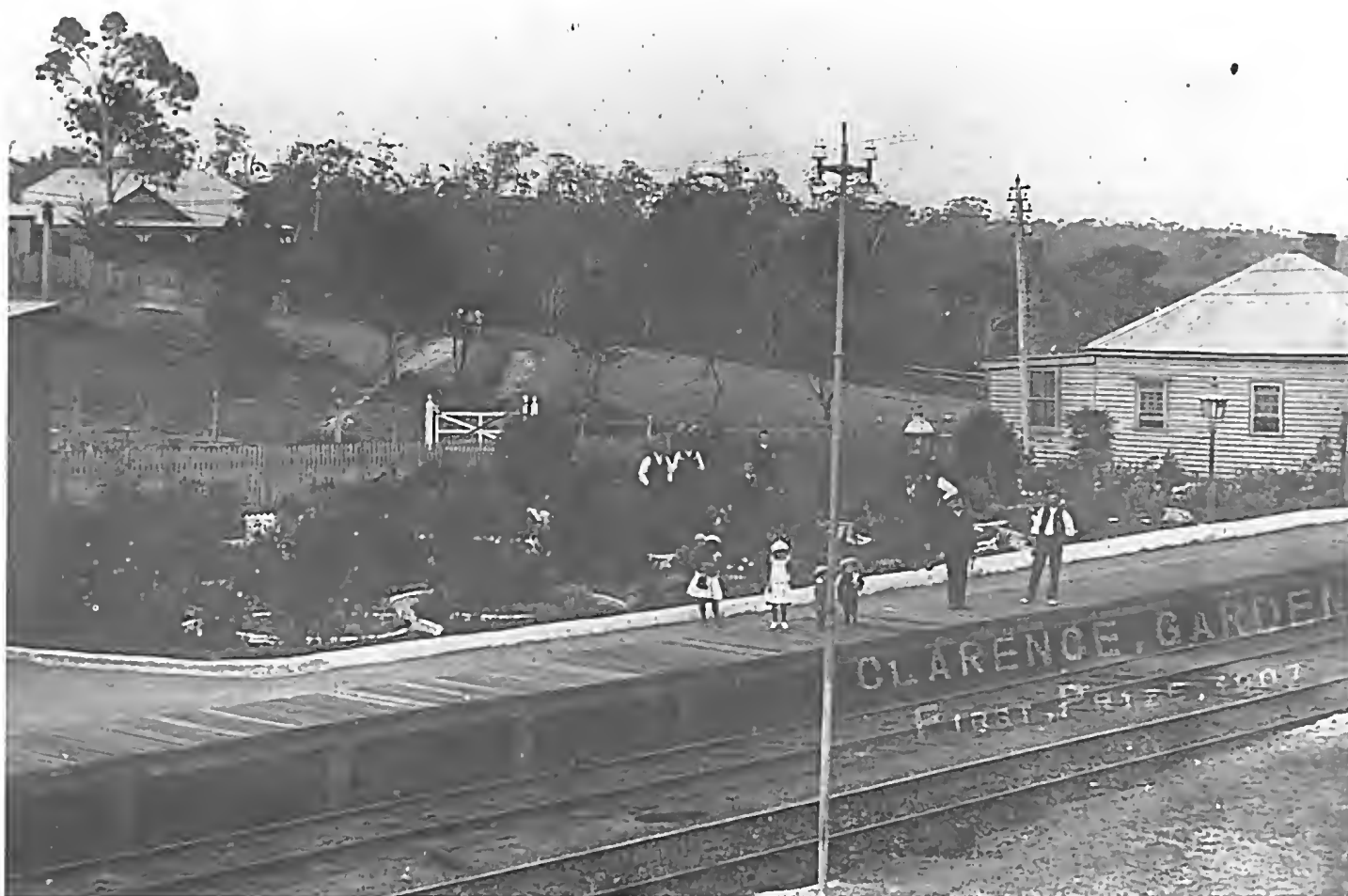
- 1 Original work of forming a garden from a purely virgin site, including well-shaped beds, well selected edging plants to match, careful preparing of soil, trenching, manuring and judicious drainage;
- 2 Valuable collection of plants;
- 3 Wise selection of shrubs for the position, climate and otherwise;
- 4 Continuity of flowering throughout the year.

It was 'absolutely the best and most attractive and the one worthy of the prize'. Killara came second in that year's Championship. During 1908 Clarence slipped out of the placings due to an exceptionally severe winter.

It was 'absolutely the best and most attractive and the one worthy of the prize'

Considerable care and effort went into making and maintaining this particular station garden. Clarence is always a particularly cold, windy site, receiving many snowfalls in winter. Nutrient poor, free draining soil and a





Clarence Garden First Prize

short growing season all combine to limit outside horticulture. However the harsh environment had been overcome to produce this prize winning garden. In 1908 Clarence was awarded a Special Prize 'for results obtained under adverse conditions' even though it did not place that year.

1909 saw Clarence awarded the Second Prize in its Section behind Brewongle. Clarence was finally abandoned in October 1910, with the opening of the new double track ten tunnel deviation around the great Zig Zag. (Wylie & Singleton 1958) Betteridge (1991) contains a description of subsequent station garden competitions. Fine modern examples probably include the stations of Redfern in New South Wales and Kuranda in Queensland.

Reflection

Modern attempts to beautify the often bleak landscape of a railway station platform tend to suffer from utilitarian, commercial approaches to landscaping. Treated pine planters sporting assorted advertising signs, contain an inadequate volume of soil to be viable without intense maintenance. Their size is utterly out of scale with their surrounding landscapes. Materials are usually not sympathetic with those of the station structures. Overall the compositions rarely integrate with the style of the station buildings, as they had done so well at Clarence. As well, few reflect the personal commitment of staff to their surroundings.

Jim Longworth

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BOOK REVIEWS

Garden History and Historic Gardens in Victoria: a Bibliography of Secondary Sources, Australian Garden History Society (Victorian Branch) (AGHS, Melbourne, 1990, 20 pp., RRP \$5.00)

Australian Heritage Commission Bibliography Series. No. 4. Australia's Historic Gardens, Parks and Trees by the Australian Heritage Commission (Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1991, iv+45 pp. & addendum, RRP \$4.95)

Our Botanical Heritage: Catalogue of an exhibition, May 6-26, 1991 compiled by Helen M. Cohn and Eve Almond (National Herbarium of Victoria, Melbourne, 1991, 33 pp., RRP \$2.00)

Gardens in Time, 20 Oct.-20 Nov. 1987: Catalogue of the Exhibitions edited by Robin Eaden, compiled by Roslyn Blandy, E.G. Denny, Robin Eaden, Jennifer Gardner, Jennifer Tonkin & Susan Woodburn (Barr Smith Library et al., Adelaide, 1987, 121 pp., RRP \$15.00)

Two bibliographies and two catalogues: hardly likely to appease Alice (although you will find a stray photograph or map), but for the garden historian, gardener, botanist or bibliophile, a feast of festive proportions.

The authors of *Garden History and Historic Gardens in Victoria*, believe that a meaningful garden history of Victoria is still some way off. As compensation, they offer this extensive selection of information sources for the budding historian. Over 300 secondary sources (in which the subject is treated 'in retrospect rather than prospect') are grouped into six broad categories - overlapping and arbitrary groupings to some extent but quite practical nevertheless. Besides whetting the appetite of Victorians, they hope to prompt other state branches to follow their lead. Additions and corrections to the list are warmly accepted (a form is provided for new entries). My humble suggestions for the next edition: an alphabetical listing of references by author, followed by a simple index.

The second bibliography, *Australia's Historic Gardens, Parks and Trees*, pays tribute to the first and to Victor Crittenden's *History and Bibliography of Australian Gardening Books*. Crittenden bridges the soulless world of bibliography and the subjective analysis of a written history by doing both. The Australian Heritage Commission fleshes out its list by annotating all entries with a sentence or two describing the work. This means that compared with the Victorian bibliography you get about the same number of entries in twice the number of pages. In addition to more information, you get different sorts of entries. The AHC extracted its references from an on-line bibliographic database (HERA) - someone punched in the codes for parks, gardens and trees and out came the book (I was amused by the addendum including ten botanical and zoological garden references, overlooked because they 'were given a scientific classification by the HERA indexers'). As acknowledged in the introduction, unlike the Victorian effort, HERA doesn't include unpublished students' theses. So you get bits and pieces from both bibliographies, and

the HIERA effort at least has a locality index.

If you find these secondary sources unsatisfying, try the brace of catalogues. Each was written to accompany an exhibition of our gardening and botanical treasures (mostly 'primary sources'). While one follows the basic bibliographic recipe, the other enriches traditional catalogue fare with analysis and discursion. Both are quality secondary sources and each a meal in its own right. *Our Botanical Heritage* portrays the endeavours of botanists at the National Herbarium of Victoria against a background of colonialism and egotism. The authors carve our botanical past into two major chunks, the plant hunters and the publication of their findings. They retrace the evolution of botanical knowledge to the *Flora of Victoria*, currently in preparation at the National Herbarium of Victoria. The exhibition was designed to show-off the wares of the National Herbarium of Victoria but the scope of the exhibition extends across Australia and even to Europe as the exploits of a cast led by Ferdinand Mueller are gleefully recounted. Appended to this delightful romp (with maps of various expeditions) are snippets about plants for gardening, food, medicine and various other economic uses. It includes a brief bibliography and glossary. (Note that a teacher's kit suitable for VCE Australian studies is available for \$12.00)

The Adelaide publication, *Gardens in Time*, has no narrative, but most of the exhibits listed are accompanied by short explanatory notes, ranging from 'the second from the left in the upper row is...' to punchy mini-essays. Such a design would perfectly complement a tour through the exhibition, while the Melbourne approach suits contemplation after your visit (or before planning your return). In other words, the Adelaide catalogue suffers more from the absence of exhibits (which is perhaps as it should be). However, the Adelaide catalogue is far from a transient pamphlet, one you might expect to pay dearly for at an art show. Like *Our Botanical Heritage*, it is a reference worth keeping and worth buying even four years after the exhibition. It is rich in classical lore, providing plenty of memorable quotes (e.g. Chaucer's translation of *La Roman de la Rose* includes 'lilil path...of mentes ful, and fenel grene'). The scope of *Gardens in Time* takes us far beyond the shores of Australia, beginning with Dioscorides in 100 AD. Five institutions were included in this massive exhibition of mainly books and photographs: the Barr Smith Library, the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide and State Herbarium, the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia (SA Branch), the State Library of South Australia and the Waite Agricultural Research Institute. It has a bibliography but no index.

A literary meal is never complete without a good index.

Tim Entwistle

Marathon, a Garden Worth Conserving

Marathon's ornamental garden is situated at Marathon Drive, Mt. Eliza, approximately forty kilometres from Melbourne's GPO. It is one of the few reasonably intact examples of Walter Richmond Butler's landscape works. Built for the late Brigadier-General Harold W. Grimwade between 1920 and 1921, with alterations and additions made up to the 1930s, it is considered to be an important part of Australia's heritage and worthy of conservation for present and future generations.

The architect, Walter Butler, who also designed a number of extensions and renovations to the house, which dates back to the 1860s, is considered one of the finest architects of his time. Between 1905 to 1925 Butler was the leading 'society' architect in Victoria with a clientele reading like a who's who of the wealthy and well known. His career was extremely varied, including designs for both private and commercial premises. Butler believed that the architect should also be the garden designer, in that way ensuring the necessary uniformity of design (see *Australian Garden History*, 1, 6, pp.6-11 for details of Butler's garden philosophy).

Marathon has been part of the history of Mt. Eliza, and for that matter Frankston, since the 1840s beginning with the first European to settle on the Mount, James Davey. Davey was granted a pre-emptive right to a square mile of land (640 acres) and he built a large home on top of the cliff overlooking the bay which now bears his name. In 1861 the property passed to Francis Stephen, a solicitor, who erected a six-roomed weatherboard cottage with stables and planted on the slopes of Kackeraboite Creek,

just below Marathon's current ornamental garden, an orchard, long afterwards known for its good fruit. On the death of Stephen's son-in-law the Marathon estate was acquired, in 1912, by the then Lt-Colonel Harold W. Grimwade.

At this time the property consisted of some cleared paddocks and bushland with weatherboard house buildings. Grimwade had renovated the house by 1911 and then saw active service. His wife, Winifred, and young daughter Gwenda (later Lady Manifold), were also abroad during the war; only son John Grimwade remained in Melbourne where he lived with his uncle (later Sir) Russell Grimwade at Miegunyaff. During this period Marathon was used only as a summer retreat. It was not until 1920-21 that work on the present ornamental garden began, with alterations and additions up to the 1930s.

The ornamental garden at Marathon is approximately 0.5 hectares, and exhibits much of Walter Butler's design philosophy. The garden is built on a sloping aspect, facing north-east towards Frankston. It is clearly geometric in design, divided up into a number of rectangular rooms, each having its own character. Stone retaining walls are used to divide each level with flights of stone steps connecting each room. The whole is strongly Italian in its design. Throughout the garden, ornaments, trellising, lattice work and a pergola on the garden's coastal side are utilised to highlight areas, to provide focal points, and to define pathways and spaces. At various points, especially from the viewing platform, the garden contains extensive views of Daveys Bay and Port Phillip Bay, and true to

The formal garden at Marathon (pictured c.1928) from Walter Butler's photograph album



Walter Butler's design philosophy there is a clear connection between the house and garden, in the form of an open verandah overlooking the ornamental garden.

The garden layout has changed little since the garden was first established, although the last 77 years have taken their toll, with the deterioration and loss of a number of garden structures, the senescence of remnant trees and hedges and the planting changing from an extremely formal style with no trees planted in the garden itself, as seen in earlier photographs, to its complete opposite, the informal planting of recent years.

Marathon has recently been sold, thus passing from Grimwade ownership for the first time. The property is of great significance and it is to be hoped that the new owners do all in their power to maintain and conserve its important attributes.

Sam Cassar

Khancoban in Jeopardy

The New South Wales town of Khancoban was established by the Snowy Mountains Authority in 1960, but with the gradual dismantling of the Authority maintenance of the town's picturesque environment is in jeopardy. A member of the AGHS, Mrs Patricia Copes, has written to the Society to voice her concern that restricted funding may well cause the demise or substantial attrition of this landscape. The following is an edited version of Mrs Copes's letter.

*Neutral Bay, NSW
November 1991*

You may indeed be familiar with Khancoban, although I visited it for the first time recently and was 'knocked out' as they say by its charm.

Khancoban has been blessed with an abundance of beautiful trees, thanks, it would appear, to the encouragement of Lady Hudson, wife of the Snowy Mountains Authority's first Commissioner. Apparently each person moving into a new house was given twenty trees to plant – after thirty years many of these were bigger than the houses and have had to be removed. Not only are the streets lined with birches, hawthorns, oaks and elms, but residential streets are planted with different varieties of fruit trees. These are pruned and sprayed by the Snowy Mountains

The Rose Garden at Khancoban



Patricia Copes

Authority which maintains the public spaces. The town also boasts an enormous rose garden – about thirty years old with some magnificent specimens of old varieties.

However, Khancoban as it is today is doomed as the Snowy Mountains Authority has decided to hand the township over to the local Shire. Khancoban originally boasted 7,000 people, but the population is now down to 500 and the Shire cannot afford to maintain these facilities for such a small number. In consequence, it appears that any trees needing maintenance will be ripped out (all fruit trees) and the wonderful rose garden will be bulldozed. No more lawn mowing either. I have received most of my information for this sad state of affairs from local residents and have not spoken to anyone in an official capacity.

Khancoban's horticultural history should, I feel, be recorded and publicised before it all disappears. I just fell in love with the town and felt a little publicity or public interest might help conserve its beauty.

Patricia Copes

Historic Gardens Conservation Fund

The Department of Planning and Housing in Victoria is responsible for the administration of a garden loans program to assist owners of historic gardens. Funding from Victoria's 150th Committee and a National Estate Grant has been used to establish the Fund, and loans between \$1,000 and \$5,000 are available at an interest rate of 6.75% per annum. These are provided for restoration, conservation and rejuvenation of gardens associated with buildings on the Historic Buildings Register, in areas where the Historic Towns Program operates and the Central Goldfields Region, and gardens listed in the Victorian Gardens Inventory (1988).

A wide range of projects are suitable for funding, including reinstatement of the original garden layout, planting, path works, garden conservation and management, tree surgery and restoration of garden structures. Gardens which have received funding include 52 Bramble Street, Bendigo; Port Fairy Botanic Gardens; Barwon Park, Winchelsea; Hymettus, Ballarat; and the fernery at the Eyrie, Bendigo. Recently funding was approved to the Maldon State School to assist with reinstatement of a shrubbery and installation of a watering system.

Applications are assessed by a committee comprised of representatives from the Historic Buildings Council, Royal Botanic Gardens, National Trust, Victorian College of Agriculture and Horticulture – Burnley, Australian Garden History Society, Royal Horticultural Society of Victoria, and two community representatives. Main selection criteria are the project's heritage value, urgency of the work and community benefit.

The Committee assesses applications four times each year; the next closing dates for applications are 13 March and 12 June 1992. Application forms are available from the Heritage Branch, Department of Planning and Housing, GPO Box 2240T, Melbourne 3001. For further information and a project brochure, call John Hawker at the Department on (03) 628 5477.

John Hawker

Following page: The Eyrie, Bendigo, has recently benefitted from a low interest loan to undertake conservation work in its garden

Drawing on Nature

Imagine a room filled with images of nature. Better still, go to the travelling exhibition 'Drawing on Nature: Images and specimens of Natural History from the collections of the Museum of Victoria' and see the flowers of the southern United States of America – *Magnolia grandiflora*, scrambling yellow-flowering winter jasmines, orange trumpets of bignonia, and the delicate umbels of American prairie grasses with black cuckoos, mockingbirds, humming birds, and prairie warblers amongst them as depicted by John James Audubon in his *Birds of America* (1827–30).

That's only part of the exhibition. As well, pressed grasses and delicate renderings of grasses and insects (1860–90) by little known Melbourne artist Arthur Bartholomew, Neville Cayley's watercolours of Australian birds, nurseryman Thomas McMillan's 1880 wax apples, Miss McMillan's drawings of peaches executed in 1904, Ludwig Becker's fine pencil and ink sketch of a Murray cod, specimens of humming birds, parrots, a gigantic Murray cod, and specimens sent by Governor La Trobe from Port Phillip to Neuchatel, Switzerland [Melbourne only] come together to create a cabinet of curiosities which will intrigue and delight the visitor.

The exhibition abounds with stories. A favourite of mine concerns Dr Bunce's forgotten apple which was grown in the Geelong Botanic Gardens by the curator Daniel Bunce (1813–73) shortly before he died. With an eye to posterity and a touch of pride, Bunce named the apple after himself,

but it has since been lost. Perhaps the exhibition will lead to its discovery. Go to the exhibition, find your favourite story, discover past and present attitudes to nature and, above all, be delighted.

Paul Fox, Curator

Itinerary

Geelong Art Gallery	6 March – 3 April 1992
Benalla Art Gallery	18 April – 15 May 1992
Museum of Victoria	25 May for six weeks



Black cuckoos with Magnolia grandiflora



National Management Committee, Sydney

11 February 1992

The National Management Committee recently met at Lindhurst, Glebe, home of the Historic House Trust of New South Wales. This was the first full meeting since the Annual General Meeting and we were particularly pleased to welcome Robin Jeffcoat, the new state representative from New South Wales. Sydney member Lester Tropman was co-opted to the Committee. Howard Tanner announced his intention to stand down from the position of Secretary and nominations for office bearers were then sought. The following members were elected or re-elected: Margaret Darling (Chairman), Lester Tropman (Secretary) and Robin Lewarne (Treasurer). Margaret Darling thanked all members for their assistance and welcomed the new Secretary; a formal vote of thanks was also moved to acknowledge the hard work and enthusiasm of our outgoing Secretary, Howard Tanner.

Robin Lewarne presented the Treasurer's report and whilst the financial position is sound, there is still a need for increased membership to boost revenue to an acceptable level. Profits from the Goulburn conference and the Bulbs and Blossoms Tour have provided a healthy boost to funds and enabled the continued use of colour printing in the journal. Increased funds were also being directed to the AGHS Office in the Astronomer's Residence, especially to enable our membership applications and renewals to be promptly processed. The Committee resolved to fund production of a new membership brochure; this will also incorporate revised subscription rates which will be increased by \$2 (single members) and \$5 (family members) from 1 July 1992.

Richard Aitken gave a report on the journal and the Committee noted the great improvement in the appearance of the journal since the inclusion of colour. There are a number of articles in hand but members are always welcome to submit material. Reports of state news are always sought; this could be news of a Society function or items of more general interest. The deadline for the next journal is 27 March 1992.

The organisers of the Goulburn conference were thanked for their hard work in making the event such a success. South Australian state representative Audrey Abbie gave a brief report on the forthcoming 1992 conference; talks and garden visits will address the theme 'Plants from the Past' and more details will be published in the next journal. Tasmanian members Fairie Nielson and Ann Cripps reported on forward planning for the 1993 conference, tentatively titled 'Cottage Gardens and Villages'.

National Management Committee: call for co-opted members

The National Management Committee has several vacancies which can be filled by co-opted members. The Committee is especially keen to hear from members with experience in journalism, public relations, tour organisation and advertising. If you are interested in serving on the National Management Committee please contact our Chairman, Margaret Darling, or new Secretary, Lester Tropman.

Help needed

We would like to hear from anyone interested in helping with the day to day activities in the Society's office in the Astronomer's Residence (adjacent to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne). Please phone (03) 650 5043.

Assistance with Journal

Thank you to the following members of the AGHS (Vic Branch) who helped mail out the previous issue of the journal: Margaret Brookes, Marian Brookes, Diana Ellerton, Beverley Joyce, John Joyce, Andrew Linden, Alicia Murdoch, Mary Richardson, Georgina Whitehead.

The AGHS wishes to thank the Urban Design Branch of the Melbourne City Council for use of their word processing facilities to assist in the publication of this issue of the journal.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 1992

Tasmanian Branch

- March Weekend
Saturday, 14 March
Meet at Annabel Scott's Dunedin, St Leonards at 11.00 am. The name is on the gate. Bring a picnic lunch and have it in the garden. Straight through St Leonards on the Blessington Road approx one mile.
Old Illaroo is the home of another of our members, Faye Thurley, at 2.00 pm, name on the gate and you pass it on the way to Dunedin, just out of St Leonards.
Marg Newton, 140 Punchbowl Road, Newstead, approx 3.30 pm.
Dinner for those who have booked. Bookings required a fortnight in advance.
Sunday, 15 March
Rachel Howell, 3 Rosevears Drive, sign on gate. Rachel sells plants and special bulbs and also has a very pretty garden. We meet there at 9.30 am. Come down the West Tamar Highway and turn right into Rosevears Drive.
The Harpers' Garden, 96 Rosevears Drive, on the right, 10.30 am.
Anne Grant's Garden at Deviot on Foreshore Drive. A cottage garden on the corner, blue roof.
The Retreat, Kyra and Rod Cuthbert, Deviot. Right hand side of highway going down the river, name on gate, just before Batman Bridge. Bring a picnic lunch and have it in the garden. Toilets available.
Bookings: Fairie Nielsen (004) 33 0077
Cost: \$12 for weekend
Would members intending to go to this event please book as soon as possible re dinner
- Wednesday, 18 March
Professor Richard Clough, former Professor of Landscape Architecture at University of NSW, will speak on the Gardens of Mogul India.
Time and Location: 7.30, Rotary Club of Hobart Rooms, 1st Floor, RACT Building, 172 Macquarie St, Hobart
Cost: \$4 per person
Contact: Ann Cripps (002) 25 1860

Victorian Branch

- Sunday, 22 March (PLEASE NOTE NEW DATE)
In March 1982 the newly formed Victorian Branch held its first function, a visit to Cruden Farm. To commemorate this occasion, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch has kindly offered to again open Cruden Farm for the Victorian Branch. A visit to Coolart has also been arranged. Self-drive, meet at Cruden Farm at 10.30am, BYO lunch and talk at Coolart, 1.00pm.
Cost: \$12 members, \$15 non-members (includes \$5 entry fee to Coolart). Closing date for bookings, 19 March.
Information: John Hawker (03) 628 5477 (business)

West Australian Branch

- Wednesday, 25 March
Guest Speaker – Mary Hargreaves. In her eightieth year, founding member and generous supporter of the AGHS, Mary will speak of her experiences in establishing three major private gardens in WA.

April 1992

Victorian Branch

- Sunday, 12 April
Visit to the gardens of Mount Macedon, including Ard Choille, Cameron Lodge and Sir Thomas and Lady Ramsay's new garden. Talk on the gardens and history of Mount Macedon by Barney Hutton. Closing date for bookings, 3 April.
Time: 9.30am, bus from National Herbarium. BYO lunch
Cost: \$25 members, \$30 non-members (please note amended costs).
Information: Di Renou (03) 417 2098 or 417 3734

West Australian Branch

- Sunday, 12 April
Garden tour – Guildford

Southern Highlands Branch

- Sunday, 26 April
Autumn in Exeter. Visits to four private gardens in the Exeter district. Morning tea provided, bring a picnic lunch.

May 1992

Victorian Branch

- Saturday, 9 May
Garden Recording Workshop day to be held in the garden at Turkeith (attributed to William Guilfoyle), near Birregurra in the Colac district. Use own transport and meet at Turkeith at 10.00am. Lunch, morning and afternoon tea provided. Cost: \$30 member \$20 student \$40 non-member. Information: Helen Page (03) 397 2260 (ah) or leave message on (03) 650 5043.

June 1992

Tasmanian Branch

- Wednesday, 24 June
Winter lunch and slide day. Mrs Anne Downie will show her slides of private and public gardens in the United Kingdom and France.
Time and Location: 11.30am, Dungrove, Bothwell
Cost: \$10 per person
Bookings: Anne Downie (002) 59 6155 (limit 40)

July 1992

West Australian Branch

- Wednesday, 1 July
Annual General Meeting with Guest Speaker

August 1992

Victorian Branch

- Tuesday, 11 August
Annual General Meeting, please note this date in your diary. Peter Watts will speak after the meeting on the 'Marriage of House and Garden – for better or worse'.



National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

Dame Elisabeth Murdoch's garden Cruden Farm, to be visited on 22 March 1992 (please note revised date for this function)

Tasmanian Branch

- Sunday, 16 August
Annual General Meeting. Mr Rod Barwick will speak on
Bulbs and historical associations.
Time: 2.00pm
Location: Campbell Town

September 1992

Victorian Branch

- Thursday 24 September to Sunday 27 September
Field trip to Wilson's Promontory led by Rodger Elliot.

West Australian Branch

- Sunday, 13 September
Workshop – documenting an existing garden

Tasmanian Branch

- Sunday, 27 September
Spring Gardens, Hobart

Southern Highlands Branch

- Sunday, 27 September
Gardens and Rhododendrons of the Illawarra. Lecture
and tour of the Rhododendron Gardens in the Illawarra
and visit to private gardens in the district. Morning tea
provided, bring a picnic lunch.

October 1992

National Management Committee

- 23-26 October 1992

National Conference to be held in Adelaide on the
theme 'Plants from the Past'. More details in next journal.

West Australian Branch

- Saturday 31 October and Sunday 1st November
Country Gardens Weekend. Destination to be
announced.

November 1992

Victorian Branch

- Saturday, 7 November Plant Sale Day
- Saturday 14 November to Sunday 15 November Mans-
field/Benalla weekend.

Tasmanian Branch

- Sunday, 15 November
Plant Fete. We are looking forward to having our fete
again this year and do ask you all to start 'potting up'.
Time: 11.30 am
Location: Mr and Mrs Stephen Kerrison's home Egleston,
Campbell Town

Sydney and Northern NSW Branch

- late November
Mount Tomah/Mudgee/Coolah
It is proposed to hold a weekend excursion to visit the
Mount Tomah Botanic Gardens in the Blue Mountains
and interesting gardens in the Mudgee and Coolah dis-
tricts. Travel will be by bus and numbers will be limited.
Contact: Beth Bond (02) 484 2941